Barbara Sosień

Rosalind's Robe: Who Is Who, or Shakespeare *à la française*

> Beaucoup de choses sont ennuyeuses . . . mais ce qu'il y a de plus ennuyeux sur terre, en enfer et au ciel, c'est assurément une tragédie, à moins que ce ne soit un drame ou une comédie . . . Mais il est un théâtre que j'aime, c'est le théâtre fantastique, extravagant, impossible . . . Dans ce théâtre . . . qui doit être joué au clair de lune, il est une pièce qui me ravit principalement . . . *Comme il vous plaira* . . . (Gautier 1966 : 241–7)

> Many things are tiresome, . . . but the most tiresome thing on earth, in hell, or in heaven is assuredly a tragedy, unless it be a drama or a comedy . . . But there is a theatre which I love, a fantastic, extravagant, impossible theatre . . . Among these plays . . . [which] should be performed by the light of the moon, there is one piece which principally delights me . . . *As You Like It*. (Gautier 1899: 228–35)[1]

The above passage is an excerpt from one of the letters of the chevalier d'Albert, the main character in Théophile Gautier's novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), to one Silvio, an enigmatic addressee and in fact only a nominal character whose name sometimes does not appear until the second part or even the end of a letter. There are fourteen letters in this novel of seventeen chapters, and none of them receive a reply. Apart from d'Albert there is a second letter writer, the Mademoiselle de Maupin of the novel's title. Madeleine de Maupin addresses her epistles to one Graciosa, a schoolfriend who is as elusive a character as Silvio. Only one of Madeleine's letters is addressed to d'Albert, not to Graciosa; she is also the addressee of one of d'Albert's letters, in which he calls her "Théodore – Rosalinde." Here is the beginning of this letter:

[1] All quotations in French from *Mademoiselle de Maupin* from the 1966 Garnier-Flammarion edition; all quotations in English translation from the 1899 Gibbings edition.

> Théodore, – Rosalinde, – car je ne sais de quel nom vous appeler, – je viens de vous voir tout à l'heure, et je vous écris. – Que je voudrais savoir votre nom de femme! . . . O Rosalinde! je vous aime, je vous adore . . . Il n' y a guère que trois mois que je vous connais, mais je vous aime depuis bien longtemps . . . que de fois vous m'êtes apparue, – à la fenêtre du château mystérieux . . . O Rosalinde! . . . ô Théodore! . . . êtes-vous Apollon chassé du ciel, ou la blanche Aphrodite sortant du sein de la mer? . . . ô beau jeune homme . . . ! (Gautier 1966: 317–8; 320)

> Rosalind, for I know not by what name to call you . . . I have only just seen you and I am writing to you. Would that I knew your woman's name! . . . O Rosalind! I love you, I worship you . . . I have known you scarcely three months, but I have long loved you . . . How many times have you appeared to me, at the window of the mysterious mansion . . . Oh, Rosalind! . . . Oh, Théodore! . . . Are you Apollo driven from heaven, or the fair Aphrodite coming forth from the bosom of the sea? . . . O handsome youth . . . ! (Gautier 1899: 305–8)

The novel's recipient does not yet know the true identity of the ideally handsome, desirable young man whom d'Albert espies every day and who calls himself Théodore de Sérannes and plays Rosalind in an amateur production of Shakespeare's comedy in which d'Albert plays the part of Orlando. But there is more to Gautier's novel than the exchange of letters and women's for men's attire both in life and on the stage. As it turns out – for Mlle de Maupin disguising her sex in a masculine costume is not just a short-lived fancy, but an expression of rebellion and an idiosyncratic form of provocation – there will be no return to her condition before the experiment. The consequence of the disguise turns out to be the discovery of a startling truth about herself, and the same applies to both of her partners, d'Albert and Rosette.

When Rosalind finally discards her male apparel in Shakespeare's play, all events and emotions return to their place and become unambiguous thanks to her decision. And although we know that in reality in Shakespeare's play the lack of ambiguity is shaky, too, as we see in Act III Scene ii when Orlando courts Rosalind in male costume: "Where dwell you, pretty youth?", "Fair youth, I would I could make thee believe I love," "With all my heart, good youth" (Shakespeare 1985, ll. 328, 375, 421) – eventually Hymen can unite the (heterosexual) couples in the hope of a future happy and natural course of events. A straight reading of *As You Like It* is possible – although, of course, it's not the only possible reading, should anyone like it any otherwise (Kott 1992: 210–41).[2] So while we may say that Shakespeare's Rosalind abandons her male disguise and overcomes the temptation of ambiguity, Gautier's heroine

[2] In his excellent study Jan Kott very rightly relates these issues to the 19th-century French literature.

dons a feminine robe only once, the costume of the Shakespearean Rosalind, for the theatre play, which is treated by a bunch of bored libertines as an expeditious remedy for their ennui. And it is precisely her appearance in the dress proper for her sex (as the people around her believe), since it indicates a clear-cut biological identity, that elicits an upheaval transforming the emotional life of the other characters involved in a relationship with her/him. However, for Madeleine herself Rosalind's feminine costume and conduct is but a role, a semblance (*paraître*), not true existence (*être*) – with all of the attendant consequences. For the eponymous Mlle de Maupin is Madeleine, who in real life is taken to be the Chevalier Théodore de Séranne, who plays Shakespeare's Rosalind on the stage, who is taken for the shepherd Ganymede! The way in which the Shakespearean *imbroglio* passes into the equally complex fabric of the French Romantic novel makes the disclosure of the heroine's sexual identity assume the form of an impetuous game with mirrors which reflect the double existence of several characters, especially the androgynous nature of the heroine (Monneyron 1994).

Alongside the letters with confidential personal disclosures, the novel also contains ordinary third-person narrative and two dialogues similar to the dialogues in Denis Diderot's *Jacques le Fataliste et son maître* (1765–80). Gautier also employs dialogue in two short stories from this period in his work, *Celle-ci et celle-là* and *Le Bol de punch*. There is a correspondence between the complex structure of his dialogues and the complexity of the novel's deep structure, highlighted in the specific configuration of two of its spatial components, the chateau and the theatre, which are strictly connected with each other (Chambers 1971; Sosień 1998). In the novel's diegesis the chateau commands the central place: it is to the chateau that the plot is transferred, reaching a climax when Rosette, the mistress of the chateau, and her aristocratic guests including d'Albert, her lover hitherto, and the mysterious Chevalier Théodore de Sérannes, bored by the bucolic pastimes they have been engaged in and also dismayed at the approaching end of summer, decide to put on their own production of *As You Like It* in the chateau, for their own enjoyment. The novel's theatrification is expressed in a multi-aspect intertextual game: Shakespeare's play is summarised, commented on, interpreted, and directly incorporated – *mise en abyme* – into the discourse of the novel (Eigeldinger 1987). But that is not all: Gautier's novel also has some of the features of the 18th-century libertine epistolary novel, as may be seen in the letters of both the hero and heroine. The ones written by Madeleine not only present her own version and interpretation of the events, but also give an insight into the self-portrait of their sender. Finally there is a remote resemblance between

Gautier's novel and the picaresque novel, for Mlle de Maupin is reminiscent of a vagabond *pícara*, a feminine counterpart of the male *pícaro* present in European literature in varying forms since at least the mid-16th century. Madeleine rejects the prospect of a conventional life and marriage, and chooses a risky, unsettled existence. Unlike the situation in a picaresque novel, she does so not out of necessity but in a free choice: she is a rich, upper-class heiress. Thanks to this she embarks on a gradual and singular process of initiation: she rides about the country disguised as a man, stopping at wayside inns or accepting invitations for a stay in castles or country mansions. She lets loose her strong emotions, starts conflicts, fights victorious sword duels, makes lucky escapes, helps in the escape of another young *desperada*, who henceforth attends her disguised as a page-boy doubling the role. The male protagonist d'Albert is an intriguing conglomerate reflecting Gautier's aesthetic views. To a certain extent he is the *alter ego* of Gautier, who was a young writer at the time, albeit intensely active for some years already, but only making his debut as a novelist. The views voiced by this character are a blend of Romantic, Pre-Parnassian and Pre-Decadent ideas. They are expressed at various levels in the novel, and the common factor which they share is an almost obsessive quest for beauty at all the levels and in all the manifestations of existence.

From the moment when the plot moves to the chateau and the Chevalier de Sérannes arrives the events (of relatively small weight in the plot), the far more important behaviour and features of the characters, and their relationships become more significant and distinctive, and their emotions become hard to control or alternatively hard to express. The culmination comes with the performance of *As You Like It*, or more precisely with a grand rehearsal of the play. The incorporation of Shakespeare's play into the development of the novel, in compliance with the *mise en abyme* strategy, performs a significant structural and semantic function, as I shall try to show.

The passage from the letter with the account of this situation, in particular with a comment on Rosalind dressed as Ganymede wandering through the Forest of Arden, is preceded by d'Albert's extensive declaration and presentation of the theatre of his dreams. According to him the ideal stage performance should be free of convention and lodged on the border between a variety of traditions and aesthetic codes; it should be eclectic; it should mix and combine styles; and above all it should steer clear of literalness; not be concerned with local colour, imitation of reality, a distinctive message, critique of manners, ideological or moralising rhetoric, a logical sequence of actors' lines or the adequacy of their performance etc. D'Albert is Gautier's mouthpiece

for the presentation of his completely subjective, poetic vision of a syncretic theatre, in which costumes, props and stage decorations would hold pride of place. The dominant colours of Gautier's ideal theatre would be vivid and contrast with each other: bright green, blue, ultramarine, yellow, and red, making up a backdrop for a fantasy architecture full of turrets, domes, and arcades, set in a gentle landscape of lakes and hills. Insects, animals, birds and plants would contribute to the acting and be spectators of such an ideal performance which would neither illustrate anything literally nor present any ideology. It would be timeless, played in a nonchalant manner. Here are a few examples :

> Des vers luisants y tiennent lieu de quinquets; un scarabé . . . est placé au pupitre . . . un rideau d'ailes de papillon . . . se lève . . . Les décorations ne ressemblent à aucune décoration connue . . . tout est plein de couleurs bizarres et singulières . . . Le champignon regarde la comédie son chapeau sur la tête . . . la violette . . . se dresse sur la pointe des ses petits pieds . . . et ouvre ses prunelles bleues, afin de voir passer les héros . . . Les personnages ne sont d'aucun temps ni d'aucun pays . . . Leurs habits sont les plus extravagants et les plus fantastiques du monde . . . Tout se noue et se dénoue avec une insouciance admirable: les effets n'ont point de cause, et les causes n'ont point d'effet. (Gautier 1966: 242–6)

> Glow-worms take the place of Argand lamps, and a scarabaeus . . . is placed at the desk . . . A curtain of butterflies' wings . . . rises slowly . . . The scenery is not like any known scenery . . . All is painted in odd and singular colours . . . The mushroom looks on at the comedy with his hat on his head . . . The dainty violet stands up on her little tiptoes . . . and opens her blue eyes wide to see the hero pass . . . The characters are of no time or country . . . Their dress is the most extravagant and fantastical in the world. All is woven and unwoven with admirable carelessness: effects have no causes, and causes no effects. (Gautier 1899: 230–4)

Serving as Gautier's mouthpiece, d'Albert describes elaborate stage settings and comments on virtually all the aspects of theatre plays, from the details of scenography and costumes with reference to the 17th-century drawings of Delia Bella and Romain de Hooge, extensive observations on the actor's ideal workshop and repertoire, to direct remarks on particular characters from the plays of Shakespeare, especially (though not exclusively) from *As You Like It*, which Gautier sees as the absolute paragon of thespian excellence:

> Les personnages ne sont d'aucun temps ni d'aucun pays . . . Comme ce qu'ils débitent est amusant et charmant! . . . la tête d'âne de Bottom est aussi bien venue que la tête blonde d'Ariel . . . ; Perdita, Rosalinde, Célie, Pandarus, Parolles, Silvio, Léandre et les autres . . . O jeune fils du brave chevalier Rowland des Bois . . . Rosalinde te donne la chaîne de son cou; tu es pauvre, mais tu es aimé . . . les noires

> Ardennes ouvrent, pour te recevoir et te cacher, leurs grands bras de feuillage. (Gautier 1966: 244–8).
>
> The characters are of no time or country; . . . How amusing and charming are their utterances! . . . the ass's head of Bottom is as welcome as the golden head of Ariel; . . . Perdita, Rosalind, Celia, Pandarus, Parolles, Silvio, Leander, and the rest, . . . O young son of the brave knight Rowland des Bois . . . but Rosalind gives thee the chain from her neck; thou art poor, but thou art loved . . . The dark Ardennes open their great arms of foliage to receive thee and conceal thee. (Gautier 1899: 232–6)

The play is performed in a French translation, as would seem quite natural, although Gautier's text does not address this point. On the other hand we know that the residents of the chateau enthusiastically set about learning their lines, try on their costumes, engage in heated debates, and the props and stage sets are made by a talented amateur painter who is a guest in the chateau. D'Albert, who is also the play's director, writes to his correspondent:

> Le théâtre est dressé dans l'orangerie . . . C'est moi qui fais Orlando . . . Rosette devait jouer Rosalinde . . . mais elle n'a pas voulu se travestir en homme . . . Théodore . . . s'est offert pour la remplacer, attendu que Rosalinde est presque toujours en cavalier, excepté au premier acte, où elle est en femme . . . Notre jeune peintre a vraiment fait des merveilles . . . la forêt varie depuis le vert de l'émeraude jusqu'à la pourpre . . . ; le ciel . . . passe du bleu le plus tendre aux couleurs les plus ardentes. (Gautier 1966: 253–4)
>
> The stage is erected in the Orangery . . . I am taking the part of Orlando, and Rosette was to have played Rosalind, . . . but . . . she would not disguise herself as a man . . . but Theodore . . . offered to replace her, seeing that Rosalind is a cavalier nearly the whole time, except in the first act where she is a woman . . . Our young painter has truly wrought wonders . . . the forest varies from emerald green to cornelian purple; the warmest and the freshest tones show harmoniously together, and the sky itself passes from the softest blue to the most burning colours. (Gautier 1899: 241–3)

Rosalind, Phoebe and Orlando, played by the novel's three main characters, are to appear on the stage in the chateau's orangery; Gautier does not devote so much attention to the remaining characters in the play, though he does mention a few of the *gracieuses figures* – Celia-Aliena, Sylvius, Touchstone and Audrey etc. – inhabiting the mysterious world of Shakespeare's comedy suspended between dreaming and waking. D'Albert confides to his correspondent that many of Shakespeare's lines are dear to him, especially those said by the melancholic Jacques:

> . . . il vous semble que c'est vous-même qui parlez, et que la pensée la plus secrète et la plus obscure de votre coeur se révèle et s'illumine. (Gautier 1966: 247)
>
> . . . it seems to you as though you were yourself the speaker, and the most obscure and secret thoughts of your heart were illumined and revealed. (Gautier 1899: 235)

Although, as he jokingly admits, a theatre director has no time for melancholy.

The characters in the novel realise that by assuming the roles of Shakespeare's characters they are acting out their own story, and for them the situations and dialogues on the stage are as it were disclosures of their most personal secrets and desires:

> Tout cela nous a extrêmement intéressés et occupés: c'était en quelque sorte une autre pièce dans la pièce, un drame invisible et inconnu aux autres spectateurs que nous jouions pour nous seuls, et qui, sous des paroles symboliques, résumait notre vie complète et exprimait nos plus cachés désirs (Gautier 1966: 276)
>
> We have been very greatly interested and occupied with all this. It was in some measure a play within a play, an invisible drama unknown to the audience, which we acted for ourselves alone, and which, in symbolical words, summed up our entire life, and expressed our most hidden desires. (Gautier 1899: 265–6)

The role of the catalyst revealing their identities and hidden desires is played not only by the intromission of *As You Like It* into the fabric of the French Romantic novel, that is not only by generic interference, which often happens in literature, but primarily by the fact that the theatre costume does not hide the personality of its wearer; on the contrary, it discloses the startling truth about him/her. Moreover, the appearance of Théodore alias Mlle de Maupin in the robe of Rosalind, which comes in Act I Scene ii of Shakespeare's play, manifesting the truth about her gender, not only astonishes the audience in the chateau and fills them with admiration, but above all it is a profound shock for d'Albert and Rosette in the roles of Orlando and Phoebe. The part of Rosalind, who dresses up as the handsome Ganymede to experience freedom and love, revealing the profound ambivalence in the psychology and sexuality of Théodore-Madeleine, at the same time queries the unambiguousness of their own sexuality.

In Gautier's novel Théodore makes everyone wait a long time for his arrival at the general rehearsal, creating an atmosphere of dramatic suspense. First we hear distant footsteps, next the door slowly opens and he – but who exactly? – appears. At the sight of Théodore in the costume of Rosalind everyone utters a cry of admiration. To d'Albert all the ladies seem to be *d'une laideur révoltante* (Gautier 1966: 263) (revoltingly ugly – Gautier 1899: 242).

Rosette-Phoebe, who has been secretly in love with Théodore – Shakespeare's Phoebe sees Rosalind-Ganymede as a "sweet youth" – suffering on account of his/her reticence, suffers, turns pale and faints, suddenly realises that she is in love with a woman; while d'Albert is overawed by the newcomer's absolute beauty, Théodore in the robe of Rosalind. It is the beauty he has been searching for in humans for a long time in vain, finding it only in works of art:

> . . . le fantôme adoré et vainement poursuivi était là, vivant . . . inondé des flots d'une blanche lumière . . . J'éprouvais une sensation de bien-être énorme, comme si l'on m'eût ôté une montagne ou deux de dessus la poitrine . . . Un vif rayon l'éclairait . . . sur le fond sombrs du corridor . . . elle étincelait comme si la lumière fût émanée d'elle. (Gautier 1966: 263–4)

> . . . the phantom that I had worshipped and vainly pursued was there before my eyes, living, palpable, no longer in twilight and vapour, but bathed in floods of white light; not in a vain disguise, but in its real costume; no longer in the derisive form of a young man, but with the features of the most charming woman. I experienced a sensation of enormous comfort, as though a mountain or two had been lifted off my breast . . . A bright ray lit her up from head to foot, and on the dark back-ground of the corridor . . . she shone as though the light had emanated from her. (Gautier 1899: 252–3)

He also feels a great sense of relief: if Théodore is a woman, the infatuation he has been experiencing no longer seems unnatural and monstrous to him. D'Albert's emotional outburst is accompanied by many digressions, and a word-picturing character study stands side by side with detailed accounts of the way in which the characters in the novel have interpreted Shakespeare's text, endowing it with their own private meanings, focusing on the ambiguities and allusions, formulating aphoristic conclusions etc. Here is a selection of passages quoted from what is the longest chapter in the novel:

> Ses grands cheveux bruns, entremêlés de cordons de grosses perles, tombaient en boucles naturelles au long de ses belles joues! ses épaules et sa poitrine étaient découvertes . . . comme cette chair est blanche et colorée à la fois! . . . Sa robe était . . . de couleur changeante, azur dans la lumière, or dans l'ombre . . . des bas de soie écarlate se collaient amoureusement autour de la jambe la mieux tournée . . . ses bras . . . splendides comme de l'argent poli . . . ses mains . . . balançaient . . . un grand évantail de plumes bigarrées . . . et chacun de se demander s'il était bien possible que ce fût lui, Théodore de Sérannes . . . le damné duelliste . . . Oh! la belle Rosalinde! Aimer comme j'aimais d'un amour monstrueux . . . Orlando était moi au moins autant que j'étais Orlando . . . il m'a semblé que Théodore s'était aperçu

> de mon amour . . . ses traits et son corps sont . . . de femme, mais son esprit est incontestablement celui d'un homme. (Gautier 1966: 264–5; 267)

> Her long brown hair, intermingled with strings of great pearls, fell in natural ringlets along her lovely cheeks! her shoulders and breast were uncovered . . . how white and yet so ruddy the flesh! . . . Her dress was made of a stuff of varying colour, azure in the light, and golden in the shade; . . . stockings of scarlet silk wound amorously round a most shapely and enticing leg; her arms . . . were . . . as splendid as polished silver . . . ; her hands . . . were softly swaying a large fan of singularly variegated feathers . . . and everyone was in raptures, crying out and asking whether it was really possible that it could be he, Théodore de Sérannes, . . . the demon duellist . . . O! the beautiful Rosalind! . . . To love as I did with a monstrous love . . . Orlando was I, at least, as much as I was Orlando . . . it seemed to me that Théodore, had perceived my love . . . her features and body are indeed the features and body of a woman, but her mind is unquestionably that of a man. (Gautier 1899: 252–60, 262)

As we know, Shakespeare's Rosalind eventually discards her male disguise, overcomes the temptation of ambivalence and marries Orlando. Nonetheless, in the last sentence of the Epilogue she speaks of herself in a provocative manner in the conditional: "If I were a woman, I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me, and breaths that I defied not" (Shakespeare 1985). The "if" is left suspended in mid-air, for it is not the kiss that matters here. On the other hand Gautier's heroine rejects all the conventions and turns her back on the conditional, ultimately acknowledging her unconditional androgyny. For at the end of his book Gautier has a surprise up his sleeve, a finale different from the Shakespearean model, one that is admissible within the rules that govern the conventions in the novel, which are much broader than those applicable in the theatre. Even in the Shakespearean theatre, a gloriously free theatre, "fantastic" and "extravagant," as Gautier would have it.

Like Shakespeare, he offers two endings to his story, that is two events which occur some time after the performance of the play, outside the space of the theatre, but still within the chateau. The first episode consists of two scenes: first the alleged Théodore again comes to d'Albert in the costume of Rosalind:

> . . . si belle et si radieuse qu'elle éclairait toute la chambre, – avec ses cordons de perles dans les cheveux . . . (Gautier 1966: 364)

> . . . so beautiful and radiant that she lit up the whole room, with her strings of pearls in her hair . . . (Gautier 1899: 352)

– calling him Orlando and assuming the pose of a naked Grecian goddess. Eroticism and aesthetics, hitherto postulated in vain, are conjoined in a consummated and consummately heterosexual union:

> D'Albert était ravi, éperdu, transporté, et aurait voulu que cette nuit durât quarante-huit heures, comme celle où fut conçu Hercule. (Gautier 1966: 371)

> D'Albert was ravished, distracted, transported, and would have wished the night to last forty-eight hours, like that in which Hercules was conceived. (Gautier 1899: 358)

In the second scene Théodore-Rosalind's nocturnal love-making moves to the bedroom of Rosette (Phoebe). The first- and third-person narrative abandons all the forms used hitherto and turns into a summary of a set of vague circumstances. There are no eye-witnesses to shed any light. Save for one little hint, rather like a clue in an investigation, which may perhaps provide a relevant piece of evidence. On the morning after Rosette's maidservant finds two pearls in the bed, like the ones Théodore had in his hair when he played Rosalind . . . We cannot but agree with Ross Chambers' comment:

> The fact that the robe of Rosalind reveals Madeleine's femininity is relevant; but what is even more relevant is that the role of Rosalind reveals the inexorably ambivalent, double, synthetic nature of Madeleine-Théodore. (Chambers 1971: 107; transl. by T.B.-U.)

The double night of love-making brings the fulfilment of the erotic and aesthetic phantasmagorias of Gautier's characters. However, Gautier does not offer a happy end, not even the most emblematic, equivocal and flimsiest of happy ends. For Gautier's characters there is just one night – a one-night stand. The morning after Mlle de Maupin disappears at the crack of dawn, never to return to the world of d'Albert and Rosette – either as Théodore or as Rosalind, or as Ganymede. She makes this decision in apprehension of the destructive power of ordinary everyday life, reality which is ruinous for dreams and reveries. But she is prepared to make a concession, leaving a farewell letter addressed to d'Albert/Orlando as the only testimonial to her real existence:

> . . . brûlez cette lettre . . . et vous croirez avoir fait un beau rêve . . . La vision s'est évanouie avant le jour, à l'heure où les songes rentrent chez eux par la porte de corne ou d'ivoire. (Gautier 1966: 375)

> . . . burn this letter, . . . and you will believe that you have had a beautiful dream . . . The vision has vanished before the light, at the hour when dreams return home through the horn or the ivory gate. (Gautier 1899: 362)

The letter can be burned, to leave no trace whatsoever of the existence of the handsome Théodore/Mlle de Maupin, the elusive androgyne who had aroused such passion. Madeleine accords herself the status of an illusion, a chimaera, a fleeting spectre, and the only thing she is sure of is that her androgynous nature cannot be accommodated to reality. Flight into the world of dreams and reminiscences of the one-night dream is the only way in which the androgyne may obtain his/her proper status, turning into an emblematic, indestructible image of love and beauty, the symbol of a desire that is unquenchable and therefore indestructible:

> Votre désir inassouvi ouvrira encore ses ailes pour voler à moi; je serai pour vous quelque chose de désirable où votre fantaisie aimera à revenir. (Gautier 1966: 375)

> Your unsated desire will again spread its wings to fly to me; I shall ever be to you something desirable to which your fancy will love to return. (Gautier 1899: 362)

When he put the question of Rosalind's gender Jan Kott knew that in Gautier's novel it was not a question of the character but of the person playing that character on the stage: a question of Mlle de Maupin, one of the nineteenth-century embodiments of the ancient and ever-living myth of divine androgyny.

Translated by Teresa Bałuk-Ulewiczowa

REFERENCES

Chambers, Ross. "Mademoiselle de Maupin (1835): le château de songe." *La Comédie au château*. Paris: José Corti, 1971.

Eigeldinger, Marc. "L'intertextualité dans les récits de Gautier." *Mythologie et intertextualité*. Genève: Editions Slatkine, 1987.

Gautier, Théophile. *Mademoiselle de Maupin*. Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1966. (First published 1835)

Gautier, Théophile. *Mademoiselle de Maupin*. *A Romance of Love and Passion.* London: Gibbings, 1899; Web. 27 April 2012. <http://www.archive.org/stream/mademoiselledema00gaute/mademoiselledema00gaute_djvu.txt>.

Kott, Jan. "Płeć Rozalindy." *Płeć Rozalindy*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1992: 210–41.

Monneyron, Frédéric. *L'Androgyne romantique. Du mythe au mythe littéraire*. Grenoble: ELLUG, 1994.

Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It*. Ed. Agnes Latham. London and New York: Methuen 1985.

Sosień, Barbara. "Derrière la porte du château: sur deux images théâtralisantes." *L'espace, théâtralité et l'imaginaire. Etudes de l'Equipe de Recherche sur l'Imaginaire symbolique, textes réunis par B. Sosień*. Kraków: ABRYS, 1998.